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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable SAM BROWBACK, a Senator from the State of Kansas.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, our Father, high above all yet in all, the burdens of our world are great and our hands often seem so small. Keep us from becoming weary in doing well and use us as Your instruments in these challenging times. Forgive us when we have failed to reach out to the lost, the lonely, and the least.

Empower us to bring Your freedom to those shackled by the manacles of fear. Help us to lift some burden that is too heavy for our neighbors to carry. Renew our strength and enable us to bring light to the growing darkness. As we seek to lead by example, may others praise You because we have stood firm against evil.

We pray for the Members of our Senate. Lengthen their sight that they may see beyond today and make decisions that will have an impact for eternity. Prepare our hearts to respond to You and to live for Your glory. Help each of us to find the special purpose You have in mind for our life.

Sustain our military in the heat of its challenges.

We pray this in Your holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable SAM BROWBACK, a Senator from the State of Kansas, led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, May 5, 2004.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable SAM BROWBACK, a Senator from the State of Kansas, to perform the duties of the Chair.

TED STEVENS,
President pro tempore.

Mr. BROWBACK thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period of leader time under the standing order.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business for 60 minutes with the first 30 minutes under the control of the Democratic leader or his designee, and the second 30 minutes under the control of the majority leader or his designee.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

RISING GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I intend to use my leader time this morn-

ing and comment, if I may, on gasoline prices. They continue to hit record highs.

According to the Department of Energy, the average retail price of a gallon of gasoline in America is more than \$1.84, up 23 cents in the last two months, 33 cents in the last year, and 37 cents in the past 36 months.

In my State of South Dakota, the average price of gasoline is \$1.80 per gallon, with many communities seeing much higher prices than that. Even more troubling, the Department of Energy expects prices to remain high through the summer. This is of particular concern for rural States such as South Dakota, where many people have no choice but to drive long distances daily to get to their jobs, to receive health care, or just to shop for essentials. Americans are increasingly frustrated with skyrocketing gas prices and want to know what the Federal Government is going to do about it. And they want action now.

In March, I sent a letter to the President recommending that he take several initiatives that could curb gasoline prices at home. First, I suggested that he use the prestige of his office and his relationships with foreign leaders to press the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries—OPEC—to increase production, thereby relieving some of the pressure on gas prices in the United States in the long term. This is not a radical idea. In fact, on more than one occasion in the fall of 2000, then-candidate Bush put the challenge directly to the President. His message was clear:

What I think the President ought to do is he ought to get on the phone with the OPEC cartel and say, "We expect you to open the spigots."

If that was good advice then, it is certainly sound counsel now. Unfortunately, President Bush has not followed his own advice.

Secretary of Energy Abraham announced earlier this year that the Bush

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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